



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

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Former Head of Animal Welfare Society of Howard County Sentenced to Jail for Felony Theft

The former head of the Animal Welfare Society of Howard County has been sentenced to nine months in jail for stealing the organization's funds. Robin Deltuva, 45 of the 9300 block of Old Court Road, Windsor Mill was sentenced in Howard County Circuit Court this morning. Last April, she pleaded guilty to a single count of theft between \$10,000-100,000.

Deltuva served as president and treasurer of the organization from 2009 to January 2015 when she was terminated. In 2010, a judge dismissed similar charges against Deltuva because the organization's nonprofit status had lapsed. The reorganization was reconstituted with a board of directors and established business practices, and Deltuva remained the head of the organization. The non-profit Animal Welfare Society is located adjacent to the county's own animal shelter in Columbia.

At Deltuva's plea hearing last April, Senior Assistant State's Attorney Tricia Cecil told the court that in February 2015 a board member discovered unexplained charges on the society's bank debit cards. The group's treasurer and another board member began reviewing three bank accounts and noted payments on a pink golf cart, payments for heating, air conditioning and refrigeration work on Deltuva's house, purchases of Apple iPads and iPods, hotel stays, airline tickets and personal legal expenses. Cecil told Judge Richard S. Bernhardt that unauthorized debit card purchases totaled \$38,584.33.

At sentencing, Deltuva recounted her work and dedication to the society. "I do apologize; I do understand that some of the things were wrong," she stated.

Judge Bernhardt referred to an argument from Deltuva's defense attorney that there was no supervision exerted by the society's board of directors. "Negligence of the board is not a mitigating circumstance," he stated. "It goes to character and she failed that test in a major way," he added. The judge sentenced Deltuva to 18 months in jail, suspending all but nine months and entered a judgment of restitution of 38,584.33. Upon release, Deltuva will be placed on five years of unsupervised probation, during which time she is to have no contact with the Animal Welfare Society nor its employees, and is prohibited from entering the premises.

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